The Ukrainian's tendency to idealise is also expressed in his relation to the weaker sex which generally enjoys a position of superiority in Ukrainian society. In literature, too, the Ukrainian woman appears in such an idealised and spiritualised form that even her faults, her foibles, do not detract from her spiritual value, but serve rather to enhance her charm and attractiveness. 181 562

The sense for actual reality is almost completely suffocated by the enthusiasm of the soul for the world of the imagination, for the ideal. 19th century drama contains a goodly company of women with a positive attitude to life — national heroines like Marusja Bohuslavka, lovable girls, good and faithful to boredom like Natalie of Poltava, unhappy victims of male seduction like Shevchenko's Kateryna and finally, prophetesses with an air of tragedy like the Ukrainian Cassandra. We must not forget that, except for the last named, these old-fashioned plays are still popular with the Ukrainian public and are performed even to-day, times without number, with great success throughout Ukraine, in the towns as well as in the remotest villages. 181 562 536

Western systems of thought have always been founded on the personal consciousness of the individual. Beginning with Plato in ancient Greece philosophical speculation has always started from individual consciousness as the only evident reality which is disputed by no one, a process which is still more evident in modern philosophy from Descartes on. Fichte's system is based on the philosophy of the ego which elsewhere appears in philosophy as a complete entity, independent of all other features, a sovereign being, which, in the intellectual world, is usually the final foundation of a concrete reality. 812

Here Ukrainians, in contrast to Russians, are decidedly western in outlook. Though they have not produced philosophic systems of th .r own based on the ego as the fundamental principle, or . the foundation of further speculation, nevertheless their whole intellectual life, their ethical standards and legal code, and still more their actual conduct, are all based on the individual; and to restrict the right of the individual even in the interests of the community, is always resented as an encroachment on the freedom of will. 812 156

The Background of the Communist Triumph

Let us, therefore, look briefly at 175
the outstanding elements of the situation as they were at the beginning of the revolution.

From the time of the organization and Christianization of the Kievan state at the end of the tenth century to the eighteenth century, Ukraine, whether independent, or subject to Poland-Lithuania, or to the Russian Tsars, had remained as a political unit, even though divided. However, in 1775 Catherine II destroyed the Zaporozhian Sich, the centre of the Ukrainian Kozaks, and in 1783 she abolished all Ukrainian political institutions and privileges. From that time the area was divided into *gubernias* as the rest of the Russian Empire and the full Russian methods of administration were introduced.

From that moment, too, the Russian government spared no efforts to destroy every vestige of Ukrainian national and cultural consciousness. The Ukrainian language was treated as a peasant dialect of Russian; the name Ukraine was forbidden and even the substitute Little Russia was treated as a generic term for the area north of the Black Sea, but it did not figure on the political map of the Russian Empire as a distinct entity. The Ukrainian revival in the nineteenth century beginning with the publication of Kotlyarevsky's parody of the *Aeneid* in 1798 was confined to the cultural sphere and could offer little or nothing in the way of administrative experience to the Ukrainian people. Those Ukrainians who entered the Russian service were usually sent to distant areas, while the administrative personnel in Ukraine was chiefly Russian in origin and feeling. [536] ●

The great estates were largely owned by Russians or by Poles 186
and even many Ukrainian landowners who had succeeded in retaining their holdings were so thoroughly Russianized that they [423]
felt little sense of kinship with the peasants on their estates. Ukrainian life was lived chiefly in the villages. The Ukrainian language was not taught in the schools or used in the courts, for all education and administration were in the Russian language. Still the peasants continued their own manner of living with their own traditions and their own tastes and desires.

626 538 It was perfectly natural that a similar situation should develop in Ukraine. The various schools of serious writing, as the *Vaplite,* stood out against this regimentation and ably defended their position, but that position was indefensible in the face of political pressure and without being conscious of any inconsistency, Skrypnyk, as a good Communist and a member of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) was willing to exert pressure to bring the literary organization of Ukraine in line with that of the All-Union Communist Party at the very same time when he was deliberately thwarting the unifying tendencies of that party.

[186] [68] The first sign of the changed order came with the arrest and deportation of M. Ivchenko for his novel *Working Powers* because it endeavored to express in a concrete form the problem of fitting the ideals of the various national groups into the stereotyped formula which was now fashionable. Next came the difficulties of Khvylovy over his novel *Woodsnipes,* despite his willingness to secure an opportunity for further work by the destruction of the second part of the novel.

It must be remembered that the groups which were now being attacked were not by their essential declarations anti-Communist. They reflected, rather, the disillusionment of many people with the prevailing manifestations of Communism, the growing realization that the Communist regime was not giving the people that ideal reality which its teachings indicated they should easily win.

● [536] That was the gist of the drama by M. Kulish, the *People's Malakhy,* which reflected the contrast between the ideals of a high-minded but somewhat simple village Don Quixote and the realities of life on any particular level. This, as other of his plays, was well presented in the Berezil Theatre, directed by Les Kurbas, a Western Ukrainian who had developed in Kiev into one of the great producers and had pushed the Ukrainian theatrical art to its highest development. Writings of the same character had marked some of the early Russian works of A. N. Tolstoy after the revolution but, being a Great Russian, he was not involved in the endless controversies over the national questions and, like most of the Russian authors, he was able to work out a satisfactory agreement with the

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538 interest owing to the traces of popular influences which bring them nearer to the lyrical Ukrainian poetry.

536 It is only in the domain of dramatic art that the national originality could still find expression. For example, the Mysteries and the Fables of the West, the first Ukrainian theatre, is in the beginning the work of clergy who want to edify the people while entertaining them. The students of the Academy of Kiev are its first dramatists, playwrights, and producers. And, just as in the West, it soon loses its serious and strictly religious character. The element of entertainment becomes more and more pronounced. The people acquire a taste for these marionette performances which soon become a truly national amusement. At first they usually represented the Crib of the Nativity and all the events which took place around it. The name of 'Crib' (*vertep*) remained connected with them for ever. But the Madonna and the Child Jesus were soon supplanted by comical characters such as the Devil, the Vagabond Priest, the sly peasant, and the schemer. The social satire, a direct product of popular feeling, became the real purpose of these marionette performances and on holidays and at fairs the people crowded to see them. The Dwarfs Theatre in the Ukraine so pleased the Tsar Alexis of Moscow that he ordered the establishment of 'Comedy Plays' in the theatre of his summer residence, and this despite the protestations, the indignation, and the anathemas of the Muscovite clergy.

538 It is at the end of the eighteenth century that the intellectual and cultural movement in the Ukraine first appears. Ivan Kotliarevsky, considered the 'Father of Ukrainian literature,' called himself 'a simple amateur of the Little Russian tongue.' In reality it is the love of poetic folk-lore which characterizes modern Ukrainian literature, and it is that which labels it among local

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668 186 The society of the 'United Slavs' was only one expression of the great liberating movement, and its failure was the logical consequence of the suppression of the Decembrist insurrection at St. Petersburg on 14 December 1825, which gave it its name.

This failure checked for a long time the attempts of political revolt in the whole of Russia. Nevertheless the intellectual movement continued, always inspired by the same sources and the same ideals.

538 The genius of Chevtchenko determined the path which the whole Ukrainian literature was to follow. It clung especially to the description of popular life, of the peasant life with its sadness and its injustices. Deeply steeped in folk-lore, it was especially inspired by the pity of the disinherited, by this social pity which is a feature of its affinity with the great Russian literature. In the writings of Marko Vovtchok (pen-name of Marie Vilinska Markovitch) in the *Popular Tales*, approved by Chevtchenko himself, we find again the touching picture of the peasant miseries. Later, in Galicia, Franko, Martovitch, and Stefanik give some pretty examples of this literature, more social than national. Parallel to this, in Russian Ukraine, this tradition was pursued until the revolution by Kotsiubinsky, Tobilevitch, and, above all, by Lessia Oukrainka, the niece of Michael Dragomanov, to whom we will presently return.

536 545 The Ukrainian Theatre experienced a remarkable development towards the end of the nineteenth century. We have already considered the taste of the Ukrainian people for dramatic art, a taste which had already found expression in the old marionette plays. The rise of the new Ukrainian literature could not fail to bring about the development of a modern theatre. As a result a troupe of Ukrainian actors, that of Kropivnitzky, was formed at Kiev and had a great success. The Imperial

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Government authorized the creation of a Ukrainian language theatre, limiting, however, the subjects which could be treated. In conforming to the official point of view, according to which Ukrainian was only a local Russian dialect, it forbade the showing of plays other than those which bore a popular and local character. But this restriction could not seriously hinder the development of Ukrainian dramatic art, as it was the chief aim of the whole Ukrainian literature to treat subjects taken from the popular life. The success of the Ukrainian Theatre of Kiev did not fail to find imitators. Amateur troupes were formed almost in all parts of Russia and especially in the country, which successfully exploited the artistic qualities of a people so richly gifted.

As for Galicia, the political movement always continued to develop rapidly here.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a new figure appeared on the Ukrainian political arena, that of Dragomanov (1851–95), whose role was to become enormous.

Born in Russian Ukraine, he soon joined the intellectual revolutionary circles. Following the example of other revolutionary organizations in Russia, that of *Stara Gromada* of Dragomanov sent him abroad to spread there, as a political *émigré*, the ideas of a revolutionary Ukrainianism. Dragomanov at first allied himself with the Galician circles and settled in Austria, but he could not remain here as a result of his 'too red' ideas. After this he took the road to Geneva, the rallying centre of political *émigrés* from the old Russia. There he founded a political review, *Gromada*, and undertook, from his exile in Geneva, the direction of the Ukrainian movement in Galicia. The impulse which he gave it was extremely vigorous. It led to the formation of a new party, tinted